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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PK](#)
SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO DEMARCHE URGING THE EC TO SEND
PAKISTAN ELECTION OBSERVER MISSION

REF: SECSTATE 165479

Classified By: Polmincouns Larry Wohlers, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) USEU delivered points (reftel) on December 11 to Helen Campbell, Head of Unit for South Asia in the European Commission DG for External Relations (RELEX), and, separately, to Stefano Gatto, elections desk officer in the RELEX Office for Human Rights and Democratization. We were not able to speak directly with Richard Kuehnelt, of Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner's cabinet, but Kuehnelt passed us a message that he had been briefed on the U.S. position (presumably by Campbell) and that they would take our views into account in making a final decision. We left a message with a contact who covers transatlantic relations in Ferrero-Waldner's cabinet. It has been difficult to reach these contacts due to a number of high level EU events this week.

¶2. (C) Campbell said that Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner was expected to make a final decision on the scope of the mission sometime between December 15 and December 17 assuming the state of emergency is lifted on December 15, as expected. Campbell added that she would make sure the USG's views were known to all of the actors involved in discussions. She confided that she shared our views and that in internal discussions she was arguing in favor of sending the most robust election observer mission possible.

¶3. (C) Campbell stressed that the EC was not considering cancelling their mission outright - rather they were debating the scope and extent of the mission. Gatto noted that they were considering a range of different scenarios and were technically prepared to deploy whatever type of mission was agreed. Gatto explained the differences between the primary options being considered by the EC: a more robust EC election observer mission would involve more people on the ground. It would issue an independent, public report that was not required to be blessed by EU member state governments. (Note: Gatto cautioned that such a mission may issue a very negative public report if they have serious concerns about the elections.) On the other hand, an EC election assessment mission would involve fewer people, a more limited time span, and a report only to the EU, not to the public.

4, (C) Both Campbell and Gatto noted that the EC employs strict methodology for its election observer missions, defined by EC rules. Normally they place long term observers in country six weeks before the election, but their rules do not permit them to deploy a mission during a state of emergency, so in the case of Pakistan they have not yet been able to station observers. Even if Ferrero-Waldner decided to send observers to Pakistan immediately upon the lifting of the state of emergency, the analysis of the observers would be limited by their time constraints.

¶5. (C) Comment. A UK Perm Rep contact offered additional insight into EU discussions on the election mission. She

said no member states were currently objecting to the deployment of an EC mission, provided the state of emergency was lifted and subject to the Commission's assessment of the security situation. At the December 12 working group meeting of South Asia experts from EU capitals, the UK suggested that the presidency issue a statement the week of December 17. The statement would welcome the lifting of the state of emergency, announce the deployment of an EC election mission, and list steps the Government of Pakistan should take to ensure free and fair elections - steps related to voter registration, the need for transparency, etc. No member states objected, so the presidency agreed to issue a statement.

16. (C) The UK contact said no member states objected to sending a robust mission, and that many had offered the assistance of their personnel from embassies in Islamabad to back up the EC team on the ground. In response to our question, the contact acknowledged that some in the Commission seemed concerned about the effect that a public, negative election report could have on EU-Pakistan relations. She said that the UK had countered that argument in meetings of the 27 by stressing that the risk of a negative report should not keep them from deploying a mission. There was still time for Pakistan to rectify some of its problems before the election took place. The UK argued that the presidency statement the UK had proposed would give Pakistan the opportunity to take positive steps. End Comment.
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